

Message Text

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SUBJECT:TORONTO STAR REACTIONS ON QUEBEC, PW AND FIRST MINISTERS
MEETING

ALL CONSULATES GENERAL IN CANADA VIA POUCH

REF: TORONTO 2191

1. THE EDITORIAL AND INSIGHT PAGES OF THE DECEMBER 15 TORONTO STAR
DEVOTED SIGNIFICANT ATTENTION TO CONFEDERATION, QUEBEC AND THE
PQ IN FOUR SEPARATE PIECES.

2. IN AN OPINION COLUMN "PQ 'FOREIGN POLICY' A COMBINATION OF
NAIVETE, TRIBALISM," STAR STAFF WRITER ROBERT NIELSEN CALLED
THE PQ PRIORITIES (FIRST, RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH-SPEAKING
WORLD, THEN RELATIONS WITH THE THIRD WORLD, PARTICULARLY SOUTH
AMERICA,AND FINALLY RELATIONS THE THE US AND CANADA) AS
"TRIBALISM, NAIVETE, AND A PUTDOWN FOR THE NEIGHBORS." "NAIVETE
IS UNDERLINED BY THE SUPPOSITION THAT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED
STATES AND CANADA COULD BE ANYTHING LESS THAN TOP PRIORITY
FOR AN IMDEPENDENT QUEBEC,WHETHER QUEBEC LIKED IT OR NOT.
TO IMAGINE THAT IS TO DENY UNDENIABLE FACTS OF GEOGRAPHY
AND POLITICS." NIELSEN ALSO ADDRESSED PQ DEFENSE POLICY,
PULLING QUEBEC OUT OF NORAD AND NATO AND WONDERED IF LEVESQUE
"WAS PERHAPS LESS THAN CANDID" IN JULY FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ARTICLE "THAT THE US WOULD HAVE 'NO IMAGINABLE REASON TO FROWN'
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ON QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE." NIELSEN CONCLUDED: "TO PUT THE MATTER

MORE BLUNTLY, THE PARTI QUEBECOIS' FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICIES APPEAR INCOMPATIBLE WITH CANADA'S INTERESTS IN THE EVENT OF SEPARATION.

"THAT'S A FURTHER REASON (IN ADDITION TO THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY, LINKS TO THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES AND MANY OTHERS) WHY SOME NATIONAL PARTY, OR PERHAPS BETTER AN ALL-PARTY COMMITTEE, SHOULD BE PREPARING TO LAY DOWN CANADA'S MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS IF QUEBEC LEAVES. SUCH PREPARATIONS NEED NOT PREJUDICE EFFORTS TO KEEP QUEBEC IN, AND COULD REINFORCE THEM BY EXPOSING THE UNREALISM OF SOME PQ POLICIES."

3. THE STAR LEAD EDITORIAL "ON TO A NEW CONFEDERATION" STATED THAT "ONTARIO TREASURER DARCY MCKEOUGH CAME AS CLOSE TO THE TRUTH AS ANYONE WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE DEAL AS AN 'ACCOMMODATION'" IN REFERRING TO THE TAX-SHARING FORMULA ANNOUNCED IN OTTAWA FOLLOWING THE FIRST MINISTERS MEETING. THE STAR SUGGESTED THAT PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU MUST BE "MUCH BOLDER" IN DEALING WITH QUEBEC AND THAT THE TIME FOR PETTY PARTISANSHIP ON THE PARTY OF PROVINCIAL PREMIERS IS LONG PAST.

"ONTARIO WAS ALMOST ALONE AMONG THE PROVINCES IN PUBLICLY ACCEPTING THE NEW TAX SHARING FORMULA WITH GOOD GRACE, AND THIS PERHAPS INDICATES THAT PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS SEES THE NEED FOR COOPERATIVE RATHER COMBATIVE FEDERALISM IN THIS TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS.

"AS THE PREMIER OF THE KEYSTONE PROVINCE, HE HAS A GREAT ROLE TO PLAY IN PERSUADING HIS FELLOW PREMIERS AND THE FEDERAL PRIME MINISTER TO MOVE BEYOND TAX SHARING TO THE BUILDING OF A NEW CONFEDERATION.

"THE URGENT POINT IS THAT WITH LEVESQUE TALKING OF QUEBEC BEING OUT OF CONFEDERATION BY NO LATER THAN 1980, CANADIANS INTERESTED IN PRESERVING THEIR COUNTRY HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE IN DETERMINING THE KIND OF ACCOMMODATION THEY SHOULD MAKE. AND THAT SENSE OF URGENCY HAS TO START AT THE TOP, WITH THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF."

4. UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR DONALD SMILEY AUTHORED AN OPINION ARTICLE HEADLINED "CONFEDERATION OR NOTHING, SAYS U OF T PROFESSOR." CRITICIZING THE LOOSE CONFEDERATION RECOMMENDED BY THE STAR IN ITS EDITORIAL SERIES UNCLASSIFIED

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(SEE REFERENCE), SMILEY HELD THAT EVEN IF QUEBEC LEFT, CANADA MUST CONTINUE. "HERE AND THERE, THERE LURKS THE ILLUSION THAT IF QUEBEC LEAVES CANADA, THE OTHER PROVINCES WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE UNITED STATES. BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE AMERICANS WOULD GIVE THIS ALTERNATIVE, AND IN TERMS OF AMERICAN INTERESTS THERE IS NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD -- EXCEPT UNDER IMPOSSIBLY HUMILIATING CONDITIONS.

"AND IS IT THE MOST CRINGING KIND OF COLONIALISM TO SUGGEST

THAT IF OUR NATIONAL EXPERIEMENT FAILS, WE SHOULD BELADTEDLY
ASK TO JOIN ANOTHER WHICH OVER THE GENERATIONS WE HAVE RESPECTED.

5. THE STAR STAFF WRITER ROBERT MCKENZIE PROVIDED AN ARTICLE
"LEVESQUE STICKS CLOSE TO THIS STRATEGY MANUAL". AFTER REVIEWING
HIGHLIGHTS OF PQ PHILOSOPHY AND LEVESQUE ACTIONS, MCKENZIE
CONCLUDED: "THE PROVINCE'S FINANCIAL SITUATION REMAINS FRAGILE
AND THE IMPRESSION LEVESQUE MAKES ON HIS FIRST TRIP TO NEW YORK
AS PREMIER NEXT MONTH MAY PROVE CRUCIAL.

BUT IN THE MEANTIME, THE 54-YEAR-OLD PREMIER IS STICKING
CLOSE TO THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF HIS PARTY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
PROGRAM."

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